


Braille Monitor



JULY, 1982

VOICE OF THE NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND



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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

PUBLICATION OF THE
NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND

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THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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KENNETH JERNIGAN, *President*

NATIONAL OFFICE
1800 JOHNSON STREET
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND 21230

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* * *

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NATIONAL FEDERATION OF THE BLIND
BOX 11185
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* * *

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* * *

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CHALLENGE TO THE RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD PROGRAM IN THE STATES:

THE LESSONS OF THE IDAHO EXPERIENCE

The federal Randolph-Sheppard Act requires a priority for blind persons in operating vending facilities on all federal property. The vocational rehabilitation agency serving the blind in each state issues licenses to blind vendors and supervises the program. State laws authorize the agencies to have vending facilities operated by blind persons in public buildings, in addition to federal property. The strength of the priority required under these laws varies from state to state, but in general, the state statutes extend the federal Randolph-Sheppard priority for the blind into state, county, and municipal buildings.

The federal law permits state agencies to license only blind persons as vendors in the Randolph-Sheppard program. This rule applies on federal as well as any other property, if proceeds derived from federal locations are used to establish or maintain vending facilities on other public property. In short, the vending program must be operated as one program, in accordance with federal regulations, even though not all of the businesses are located on federal property.

Occasionally, there is grumbling because the priority to operate vending facilities on public property is limited to blind persons under federal and state laws. Mostly this comes from the coalition minded, who say that all of the handicapped should be treated identically. On its face, this argument is appealing, especially to lawmakers who are called upon increasingly to spread publicly-funded programs to more people with the same or less resources. In addition, there is the human appeal to help all of the handicapped, fueled by charges that the

federal priority discriminates against persons with other handicaps. These factors target the Randolph-Sheppard Act and related state laws for change, despite many sound arguments for retaining the current priority.

Events during the past legislative session in Idaho underscore the challenge. Idaho has a positively-oriented Commission for the Blind and a strong NFB affiliate. There are cooperation and harmony in the state. Idaho is a leader in many ways in our total national movement. The Idaho Commission for the Blind has a strong vending facilities program, backed by passage of a state Randolph-Sheppard Act in 1973.

But last winter, as the legislature convened in Boise, a bill was introduced in the House of Representatives designed to eliminate entirely the priority for the blind to operate vending facilities in public buildings in Idaho. While the bill did not disturb the priority for the blind on federal property (solely because of the federal law), it sought to wipe out completely the priority for the blind on all other property, replacing it with a priority for nonprofit agencies for the handicapped to have vending facilities. The bill was backed principally by the Idaho Association of Rehabilitation Facilities. This is a group of sheltered workshops which are organized nationally. The original bill which they sponsored through a friendly member of the Idaho House of Representatives repealed the state's Randolph-Sheppard Act passed in 1973, and thus eliminated the right of the Idaho Commission for the Blind to establish vending facilities on any public property in the state, other than federal property.

On March 9, this bill, with certain amendments, passed the Idaho House of Representatives by a vote of 66 to 3. The amendments saved part of the vending facilities program for the blind by including the Commission for the Blind, with an equal priority to that provided for the non-profit sheltered workshops for the handicapped. Also, the Commission was given the right to have blind persons continue to operate any vending facilities established under the state law as of March, 1982. These amendments were the result of work in the House of Representatives by staff of the Idaho Commission for the Blind and NFB members together. But this only moderated slightly the threat of the total bill, which we continued to oppose as it went to the Idaho Senate.

On March 17, the bill (known as House Bill 616) sailed through the Health and Welfare Committee in the Idaho Senate. This meant that it would next go to the floor. The NFB of Idaho and the Commission were battling hard. Time was short, and unless something else could be done, it appeared that Idaho would be the first state to eliminate the priority for the blind to operate vending facilities on public property.

This was the situation on the morning of Thursday, March 18, when, at President Jernigan's direction, calls went out to Federationists throughout the country, asking for representatives from several states to travel to the capitol in Boise in order to join our Idaho forces already hard at work. Within hours, as many as fifty Federationists from Alaska to Pennsylvania were boarding airplanes bound for Boise. This bill would be on the Senate floor for final action sometime on Friday, March 19.

By midnight on the 18th, we were beginning to gather to talk about strategy and to make plans for the following day.

Norman Gardner, President of the NFB of Idaho, was in overall command. Early on the morning of March 19, we converged on the Idaho Statehouse, where the Senate was scheduled to meet at 9:00 a.m. There were nearly ninety Federationists in all.

Throughout the morning we maintained a visible presence in the halls outside the Senate chambers and in the gallery. One by one, we pulled Senators from the floor, asking them to vote "no" on House Bill 616, or to vote to amend the bill in order to assure a continuing priority for the blind in all vending facilities. As the morning went by, we tallied the votes. We knew we might win a close victory.

Then, the debate started, as Senators got to their feet to speak for and against the bill. Many were concerned about eliminating the priority for the blind, as was intended under House Bill 616, but others said that it was time to give all handicapped persons a chance to operate vending facilities. The debate was intense, but after all of the speeches, it was decided that the Senate would not pass the House bill without further amendments. This was a victory for us by a vote of 19 to 15—one Senator abstained, and another was absent.

Not at all by chance, it was Norman Gardner's Senator, Vernon Brassey, who announced on the Senate floor that he would offer an amendment to give first priority to the blind for operating vending facilities on all public property. In other words, his amendment would take the heart out of the bill and leave things essentially as they were, with the blind having, in effect, the same priority as before. The bill could then pass without doing harm, and its sponsors could save face. Later in the day, when the bill came up for amendment, this change was considered and passed unanimously on a voice vote. Our work had paid off. We would not lose the

priority for vending facilities and risk the dangerous precedent which such a loss would cause, nationwide.

So we left the capitol in victory to the surprise of many Idaho legislators, and to the astonishment of the sheltered workshop lobbyists, as well. In the process we also learned much about ourselves as a movement. Among other things, we learned again that our strength lies in our determination and organizational skills. It was not just our numbers that made the difference—it was also our unbroken discipline and our ability to articulate a reasonable position. Senator Brassey commented on this when he publicly asked Norman Gardner to be his next campaign manager.

Also, we had driven home to us again the lesson that (regardless of how hot or furious the battle may be) we win by never quitting and never giving up. The Federation often loses skirmishes; we sometimes lose battles; but we never lose wars—because the war is never over (which is to say, we never quit) until we win. Besides this persistent and dogged determination, perhaps the strongest quality of our movement is our ability to respond swiftly to challenge. Because of our national unity, we have the resources to answer the call anywhere in the country, whenever the need arises. If we were a scattered, loosely connected group of state or local organizations (such as the American Council of the Blind professes to be), we would not have the capacity to throw our collective national strength into battle, regardless of how important or vital the struggle might be.

In the case of the Idaho legislation an ACB member allegedly called for help from the Council's national office. Yet, not one ACBer was present in the capitol in Boise on that fateful Friday. We know the ACB national office was concerned, because when Federationists called the toll-

free number for the Council in Washington to ask what was being done about the Idaho situation, the response given by a person described as an ACB attorney amounted to handwringing and expressions of regret.

Be that as it may, we the blind (working through our own organization, the National Federation of the Blind) have won another victory. On Tuesday, March 23, the legislation (amended in its final form to assure a continuing priority for the blind in all vending facilities—federal as well as state) cleared the legislature by nearly unanimous votes in the House and Senate and was sent to the governor to be signed. Thus, in the space of a few short days, we turned what was about to be a major tragedy into a smashing success and an outstanding demonstration of the ability of the blind to meet challenge aggressively.

The lessons of Idaho are especially pertinent in the present decade—a time when budgets are being cut, programs are being realigned or eliminated, and new balances are being struck in the power system of the nation. If we are to prevail in this day of change and instability (that is, if we are not only to keep the gains we have made but forge ahead), we must rely on our own efforts. Idaho underlines once again the fact that we can do what we need to do if we move with decisiveness and determination and if we have faith in ourselves and our cause. How any blind vendor in the nation can fail to be part of the NFB is hard to understand. This, too, is one of the lessons of Idaho. Not the American Council of the Blind, not the agencies, but we ourselves must win our rights. All of these things are involved in the lessons of Idaho. They constitute one more answer to the question as to why there is a National Federation of the Blind.

As a postscript to the Idaho experience

we print the following letter from Howard Barton, Director of the Idaho Commission for the Blind. Quiet and unassuming, Howard Barton is staunch, steadfast, and unwavering. Without fanfare or any demand for recognition he attends NFB conventions year after year as part of the Idaho delegation and as part of the movement. Here is his letter:

Boise, Idaho
March 29, 1982

Dear Dr. Jernigan:

I would like to say that during a time like the one just passed, where the blind from across the nation came to Idaho to

help us, one struggles with how to make sure everyone receives a proper thanks.

Perhaps the realization that their assistance stopped a piece of legislation designed to take away the priority rights of the blind to negotiate for food service in State and public buildings is thanks enough.

That legislative attempt was defeated and done so, I believe, because of the influence we collectively brought to bear on the legislative process.

We did it again, folks, against tough odds. Thanks for the help.

Cordially,
Howard H. Barton, Jr.
Administrator

THE NFB BRINGS HOME THE BACON IN THE RANDOLPH-SHEPPARD PROGRAM

THE BETTY MOFFITT CASE

by Marc Maurer

Three years ago Betty Moffitt, a blind vendor, was operating a vending facility in Rogersville, Tennessee. A much more lucrative vending facility became available at the Tennessee Valley Authority. Mrs. Moffitt submitted a bid for it.

The Department of Human Services in Tennessee rejected Mrs. Moffitt's bid because, according to the Tennessee Department of Human Services, she was on probation.

Mrs. Moffitt objected to her probationary status. She said that she did not violate any rule or regulation of the Tennessee Vending Stand Program, that she had operated her vending facility in a good, effective, and appropriate way, and that her probation was an error. In Tennessee

blind vendors are required to pay administrative fees (or "set-asides") to the agency which operates the vending program. Agency officials told Mrs. Moffitt that she had failed to make her payments for June and July of 1979. Mrs. Moffitt pointed out that the Department of Human Services had failed to send her the bills for these charges. In an effort to comply with the rules of the program Mrs. Moffitt made an estimated payment of two hundred dollars. Nonetheless, the Tennessee Department of Human Services charged Mrs. Moffitt with a nineteen dollar overage, and put her on probation. Because Mrs. Moffitt was on probation, her bid for a promotion to the lucrative vending facility at the Tennessee Valley Authority was not considered.

When Mrs. Moffitt appealed her denial of a vending facility based on this erroneous probation, the Tennessee Department was told that its own errors had caused the denials. Therefore, in a decision dated August 11, 1980, less than one year after the denial, Mrs. Moffitt was awarded a preference in the bidding process for any vending location which became available in Tennessee. The vending facility at the Tennessee Valley Authority was not granted to Mrs. Moffitt because this would displace the vending facility operator at that location.

Shortly after receiving this favorable ruling, Mrs. Moffitt decided to exercise her preference. A reasonably lucrative vending facility opened at the James K. Polk Building in Nashville. After winning her favorable decision in August, and after having the erroneous probationary status removed from her record, Mrs. Moffitt was astonished to learn that her victory was being snatched away by the Tennessee Department of Human Services. Officials at the Department said that, indeed, they had wronged her in the past. They said, indeed, they had granted her a preference to make up for the wrong they had done. They said, indeed, she could exercise her preference at will. But, she could not have the vending facility at the James K. Polk Building. The problem was that her preference did not mean that she came before other vendors. Rather, this preference gave her the right to have the vending facility of her choice only if she was competing with another vendor and "all other things were equal." In other words, this preference was really no preference at all. Mrs. Moffitt learned about this tortured interpretation of the word "preference" by letter dated September 8, 1980, less than one month after the decision that granted it. (Under the circumstances it seems a

trifle ironic that in 1980— at just about the time all of this was happening—the name of the James K. Polk Building was changed to "The Performing Arts Building." There was certainly artistry involved—and more than a little sleight-of-hand.)

When Mrs. Moffitt learned that the Tennessee Department of Human Resources was not going to enforce its own decision she determined that an arbitration panel be convened as provided by the Randolph-Sheppard Act. Then, the long, long wait began. Although the Federal Department of Education received the letter requesting an arbitration panel, it did nothing for almost one year. Mrs. Moffitt had been consulting with the National Office of the Federation throughout these proceedings. After many months of negotiation by Federation leaders and procrastination on the part of governmental authorities, President Jernigan sent Mr. James Gashel (our Director of Governmental Affairs) into action. Mr. Gashel is well-known to those Federal officials dealing with the blind. He handled the first Randolph-Sheppard case that ever went before an arbitration panel, the Jessie Nash case. This case was largely responsible for giving legal effect to the appeal provisions of the Randolph-Sheppard Act. The Federation began stirring and shaking the bureaucracy in Washington. The result was that in September, 1981, the federal bureaucracy began the process of appointing an arbitration panel for Mrs. Moffitt. That panel met in early March, 1982, and reached a decision in favor of Mrs. Moffitt.

Mrs. Moffitt received two kinds of relief. First, she was awarded a preference to any vending location in Tennessee which comes open within two years. Second, because Mrs. Moffitt was denied a lucrative vending location, she was granted a monetary award of thirty thousand dollars.

Here is another victory for the organized blind movement and a blind vendor. Here is also another example of the reason for the National Federation of the Blind. We worked to get the Randolph-Sheppard Amendments of 1974 passed. Mrs. Moffitt learned about her rights through our efforts in Tennessee. We negotiated in Tennessee for the best set of rules and regulations governing the Randolph-Sheppard program to be found in America. We provided counsel and advice to Betty Moffitt and her lawyer. When the bureaucracy sat on the petition for an arbitration panel we got it moving again. Finally, through our efforts, I was appointed as one of the arbitrators to

serve on the arbitration panel. The result of this common effort is that we won for Betty Moffitt thirty thousand dollars and a new vending location.

However, this case was not just for Betty Moffitt, and although it underlines once again the fact that we can help blind vendors get their rights under the law, as well as substantial monetary payments for damage, this case was not just for blind vendors. It was for all of us, for blind people everywhere. In the Betty Moffitt case we again asserted our rights and underlined our determination to have dignity and independence.

75% OF EQUALITY IS GOOD ENOUGH—

SAYS AMERICAN COUNCIL OF THE BLIND

Recently Senator Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts introduced S. 2056, a bill providing that no blind person working in a sheltered shop may be paid less than the minimum wage. Federationists will recognize this as our standard, long time, minimum wage bill. Although the proposed legislation has been introduced before by members of the House, this is the first time it has been introduced in the United States Senate. Step by step we are making progress toward our goal of full equality for the blind.

It is not hard to understand why some of the sheltered shops oppose this legislation. If the blind employees can be forced to work at what amounts to slave wages, there is less pressure on shop management to exert itself to find ways to run a tight ship and operate efficiently—not to mention the extra money left for high salaries for supervisors and the director. (Sixty thousand

dollars a year is not uncommon.) In addition, many of the shops customarily end the year with a healthy surplus.

Whenever there is talk of more wages for the blind workers, management says they can't afford it. On the face of it this makes no sense in view of the surplus and the high managerial salaries, but even if pay boosts for workers brought a crunch, thought might be given to tightening belts in other areas: managerial salaries, ratio of managers to workers, elimination of some of the meetings and conferences, and a search for better marketing and business techniques. After all, this is what any other business would do.

As has been said, it is not hard to understand why some of the sheltered shops oppose minimum wages for the blind, but it is something else again for an organization of the blind to do it—an organization which claims to be independent, uncon-

trolled by the agencies, and truly representative of the blind. Nevertheless, this is what we have witnessed with respect to the Tsongas bill. In a letter dated February 11, 1982, the American Council of the Blind chided Senator Tsongas for his action in introducing the bill.

The ACB letter begins with self-serving declarations about its legitimacy and credibility as an organization. Among other things, it makes the rather quixotic claim that the ACB is now the largest and most representative organization of the blind in the nation. If Russia claims to be ahead of the United States in military power, people may wish to argue about it; if France makes such a claim, one may think it a bit odd and a trifle brash; but if the Duchy of Luxemburg does it, one only smiles and says, "count the numbers at your next national gathering"—or "how quaint."

Be that as it may, the ACB letter quickly leaves the matter of numbers and credibility and turns to its *real* business, the attempt to scuttle the bill. As is usual with people who have a weak case, the ACB begins by explaining that things are not what they seem. They tell Senator Tsongas that he simply does not understand that the question of whether the blind have the right to earn as much as the sighted is very complex, very controversial, and very emotional.

In the first place Senator Tsongas is informed that of the 500,000 blind people in the nation only about 5,000 (or one percent) work in the sheltered shops. In other words, it is all right to exploit the shopworkers since there are only a few of them. Exploitation can be measured by the pound, and there aren't enough people involved to hurt the Senator at the next election. If the ACB should deny that this is what it was saying, what possible relevance could its statement have, and what was the purpose of bringing it up.

Continuing with the numbers game, the ACB tells Senator Tsongas that at least half of the shopworkers have some handicap in addition to blindness—and so, of course, the blind workers cannot possibly be as productive as sighted people. The ACB neglects to tell the Senator how quaint some of the NIB definitions of additional handicaps are—a few pounds overweight, speaking a foreign language, over age fifty-five, cultural and social deprivation, et cetera, et cetera.

Senator Tsongas is told that blind people are paid on the basis of their productivity and that it wouldn't really be fair to require the sheltered shops to pay minimum wages to blind workers who can't actually earn them. In other words it wouldn't be right for the shops to have to subsidize unproductive workers. Even if some of the blind shop workers couldn't produce enough to earn the minimum wage (and our experience indicates this is not usually the case) a fairly strong case can be made for the moral rightness of a certain amount of subsidy. Otherwise, why do the shops not have to pay corporate or other taxes? Why are they given preference in receiving government contracts without the necessity for competitive bids? Why do they seek and receive large charitable contributions from the public, and why are those contributions tax-deductible? Why have many of the shops received (directly or indirectly) large state and federal grants? Surely some of all of these subsidies were meant to help the workers, and not merely the management—even admitting that the management often is not competitive if called upon to function in the real world of private business.

The letter from the American Council of the Blind to Senator Tsongas is filled with charts, statistics, and double talk, but the complexity and the wordiness do not really

help its cause or hide its purpose. The American Council of the Blind is serving its usual function as a front for the custodial agencies and spokesman for the powers that really control it. Even so, the letter does more to help than hurt the case of the NFB.

It says that there is no need for minimum wage protection because the Labor Department already requires that blind people be paid according to their productivity. Later it says that there are such widespread violations of the Labor Department Regulations about the certificates of productivity that something must be done to tighten up enforcement. In fact, the American Council of the Blind is so worried about this matter that it passed a resolution at one of its recent conventions saying that (regardless of productivity) no blind worker in a sheltered shop should receive less than 75% of the minimum wage—even if this means subsidy. But why three-fourths? Why not two-thirds, or four-fifths, or fifty percent? For that matter, why not nothing less than the minimum wage, just like everybody else?

After all, the same arguments that the American Council of the Blind now makes against paying minimum wages to the blind are precisely those that industry made against paying minimum wages to workers in general. People have different abilities and different skills. The better workers would have to subsidize the less efficient. Business would go broke. But Congress decided many years ago that if an individual was capable of working at all, he or she should receive at least a minimum wage to ensure a certain standard of decency and health. This is all we ask for the blind. At some future time Americans may decide that the minimum wage is not in the public interest and should be abolished, but until or unless this happens, we believe the blind

are entitled to be treated on terms of equality with everybody else. There is no evidence to show that, as a class, we are less capable or less productive than the sighted, but there is a great deal of evidence to show that the subminimum wage certificates issued by the Labor Department have been and are the continuing subject of wholesale abuse. They have been used to exploit the blind and deprive us of equal citizenship. The only way to eliminate the abuse is to eliminate the subminimum wage certificate.

Incidentally, one of the more bizarre arguments put forward by the ACB is that productive blind workers would resent the payment of minimum wages to those who are less productive. Perhaps—but I think in view of the overall picture, we could manage to bear up under this inconvenience.

The letter from the American Council of the Blind to Senator Tsongas is the strongest possible indictment of that so-called “independent organization of the blind,” the American Council of the Blind. It is inconsistent, it is illogical, it is degrading, and it is a document of shame. Surely the ACB’s own members will read it with embarrassment and wish to repudiate it. Seventy-five percent of equality is not enough. One is either a first-class citizen, or one is not. Let the ACB letter speak for itself. Here it is:

American Council of the Blind
Washington, D.C. 20036
February 11, 1982

The Honorable Paul E. Tsongas
U. S. Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tsongas:

The American Council of the Blind is the largest national membership organization

of blind and visually impaired people in the United States and has for more than twenty years engaged in numerous activities designed to better the lives of its members through legislation, legal advocacy and education aimed at improving the public's awareness and attitude toward blindness and visual impairment. Our members come from all walks of life and represent a variety of occupations including the professions, technical trades, retailing and manufacturing. Many of our members are employed in sheltered workshops, often on a part time basis. Many of these individuals earn at or above the statutory Federal minimum wage of \$3.35 per hour and may also receive either Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits or Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits.

The American Council of the Blind wishes to comment on your recently introduced bill, S 2056, which would amend Section 14C of the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) to require that all blind workers must be paid at least the Federal statutory minimum wage. Although this legislation at first blush seems to be a rather straightforward matter about which there could hardly be any disagreement, the American Council of the Blind believes that the minimum wage issue involves many complexities and that any amendment to Section 14C of the FLSA should be the result of reasoned analysis of all of the facts rather than an emotional response to what admittedly is a very controversial issue in the blindness community.

As you know, approximately 500,000 Americans are blind. Of this number, for 1981, only 5,429 blind individuals were employed in workshops participating in the Javits-Wagner-O'Day Program administered by the Committee for Purchase from the Blind and Other Severely Handicapped (the Committee) and the National Industries for

the Blind (NIB). Of these individuals, according to NIB figures for the same year, 2,770, or 51 percent of the individuals so employed had handicaps in addition to blindness. Despite this fact, the average wage paid to blind workers in member shops of the National Industries for the Blind was \$3.40 per hour (\$4.43 per hour including fringe benefits).

Current law requires that blind workers be paid on a par with non-handicapped workers based upon the worker's productivity and the prevailing wage rates in the community for similar work. Thus, it cannot be said that a blind worker's income is limited under current law, since a blind worker is to be paid for what he produces. The real questions are simply, how much should a sheltered workshop subsidize workers who do not produce at the minimum wage level, and how should labor standards be enforced to adequately protect blind workers?

The number of individuals that would actually be affected by a requirement that all blind workers be paid the Federal statutory minimum wage is relatively small. As noted earlier, only approximately 5,000 blind individuals are currently employed in workshops administered by the National Industries for the Blind. Although many blind persons are unemployed despite the desire to work, estimates by the Society for the Prevention of Blindness and the National Eye Institute indicate that over 50 percent of the blind population in the United States is over the age of 65 and thus is not in the labor market. In view of the fact that only approximately 5,000 out of a potential labor market of approximately 250,000 blind individuals are employed in sheltered workshops, it is clear that fewer than one out of seven blind people are employed in sheltered work settings.

Statistics are often mistakenly quoted

from a 1979 Department of Labor report indicating that half of the blind workers employed in sheltered workshops are paid less than \$1,500 per year. (See Report of the Department of Labor, *Sheltered Workshop Study: A Nationwide Report on Sheltered Workshops and Their Employment of Handicapped Individuals*, v. 2, March 1979). Two observations must be made concerning this report. First, the writers of the report clearly state that their figures on annual earnings in certificated shops are based on 1975 data, at which time the Federal statutory minimum wage was \$2.10 per hour. The average annual wage in certificated shops was \$2,762 per year with 66.8 percent of the workers earning over \$1,500 per year. (See attached table from the above cited Department of Labor study, page A-200). This was despite the fact that, as noted by the writers of the report, many sheltered workshop workers worked only on a part time basis because of limitations associated with multiple handicaps or the desire not to earn more than the earnings eligibility level for SSDI benefits. (See the above cited Department of Labor study, page 59). It should also be noted that according to the Social Security Administration's monthly benefits statistics for August 1981, approximately 69,000 blind individuals receive SSI benefits which may supplement earnings or other income. Furthermore, according to recent figures published by the American Foundation for the Blind, approximately 108,000 blind individuals receive SSDI benefits, which are paid so long as the blind individual does not earn in excess of the current earnings eligibility level of \$500 per month.

Thus, the question remains whether a sheltered workshop should subsidize workers who by reason of multiple handicaps or by choice do not produce at the

minimum wage level. Under current law, a workshop can apply for a so-called "blanket certificate" which requires the shop to pay all workers according to their productivity, but in no case less than 50 percent of the Federal statutory minimum wage. Alternatively, a workshop can apply for an individual certificate for a particular worker which would permit payment of no less than 25 percent of the Federal minimum wage. Obviously, any proposal which would require a workshop to pay a worker without regard to his productivity, whether the guaranteed floor is at 50 percent, 75 percent or 100 percent of minimum wage, means that a subsidy is paid to the worker who does not produce at the floor level. When the FLSA was amended in 1966 to provide for a guaranteed subminimum wage of at least 50 percent of the applicable Federal minimum wage, it was felt that workers should be guaranteed at least a subsistence wage despite their inability to produce at that level. The American Council of the Blind, through a resolution passed by its members in convention in Grand Rapids, Michigan in 1979, established a policy that sheltered workshop workers should in no event be paid less than 75 percent of the generally applicable Federal minimum wage and that the so-called blanket certificate should be eliminated. Thus, any worker who is paid less than 100 percent of minimum wage must be covered by an individual rate certificate requiring the employer to clearly show that the individual could not be employed unless he was paid less than the full Federal minimum wage, and in no event less than 75 percent of the Federal minimum wage. A copy of Resolution 79-06 is attached.

This approach is far more equitable than an amendment to the FLSA, which would require payment of at least 100 percent of the Federal minimum wage to all blind

workers without regard to productivity. Many sheltered workshops could not afford to pay immediately a subsidy to all blind employees in order to guarantee each individual at least 100 percent of minimum wage without regard to that individual's productivity. In addition, any subsidy paid to a worker regardless of amount may reduce that worker's incentive to produce and may create some resentment on the part of those workers who are productive and who do not receive a subsidy.

Thus, in order to permit the wage system in a sheltered shop to be equitable and yet provide at least a subsistence wage of 75 percent of the Federal minimum wage to those workers who cannot produce at that level, the American Council of the Blind believes that a 75 percent floor coupled with individual rate certificates and stricter enforcement of FLSA is a much more workable approach than a straight across-the-board payment of 100 percent of minimum wage without regard to productivity.

Finally, the American Council of the Blind firmly believes that stronger Federal efforts are needed to provide employment opportunities and to protect the rights of blind people both in sheltered workshops and competitive industry, and that the Department of Labor should more closely administer the enforcement of labor standards in sheltered workshops. As noted in a study prepared by the General Accounting Office for the Honorable Barry M. Goldwater, U. S. House of Representatives, dated September 23, 1981, (HRD 81-99), the GAO reports that 60 percent of the 524 sheltered workshops for the handicapped investigated had underpaid workers approximately \$2.7 million. The GAO found problems in computing piece rates, establishing hourly rates, determining prevailing wage rates in local industry and maintaining adequate records. Some shops

did not comply with the terms of approved labor certificates and further, some shops failed to pay handicapped workers in accordance with their productivity.

These obvious abuses should not be allowed to continue. The Department of Labor and the Committee should more vigorously monitor workshops in such areas as:

- establishment and review of wage rates and production standards to ensure that they are fair, reasonable and accurately calculated;
- eligibility of workshops to participate in the Javits-Wagner-O'Day program to ensure that at least 75 percent of the direct labor hours for each workshop is provided by handicapped workers;
- better evaluation of workers' skills and abilities to ensure that each individual's employment potential is maximized;
- increased efforts to place in competitive employment those workers who wish to work outside of the workshop setting.

The Department of Labor and the Committee should devote more staff time to these monitoring activities and should require more complete recordkeeping and financial disclosure from NIB and NISH. It is clear that payment of 100 percent of the Federal statutory minimum wage to all blind workers will not eliminate deficiencies in enforcement of labor standards.

The American Council of the Blind thanks you for your concern for blind Americans and your thoughtful consideration of our views. Stronger enforcement of labor standards coupled with a guarantee of 75 percent of the minimum wage and individual certificates for blind workers will ensure that the sheltered workshop system will operate as Congress intended to pro-

vide training and job placement for handicapped workers, while at the same time ensure that those workers who remain in sheltered employment will be treated equitably.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact the American Council of the Blind.

Very truly yours,
Oral O. Miller
National Representative

cc: The Honorable Lawton Chiles
The Honorable Carl M. Levin
National Industries for the Blind

U.S. COURT OF APPEALS SAYS BLIND SHOP WORKERS

HAVE THE RIGHT TO ORGANIZE:

A REPORT ON THE CINCINNATI VICTORY AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

March 17, 1982, will be remembered forever as an historic day in the struggle of the blind for equal rights. This battle for equality is being waged on many fronts, but nowhere more intensely than in the sheltered workshops. It is in the workshops, too, that the resistance is often the most stubborn. Even so, the times are changing, and the future is with the blind.

Anyone who doubts that we are making progress toward equality is simply not able or not willing to accept the facts as they are. Consider, for instance, what transpired on March 17, 1982. On that day the United States Court of Appeals for the Sixth Circuit handed down its decision in the case entitled "*Cincinnati Association for the Blind vs. The National Labor Relations Board*," upholding the Board's order that the Association must submit to collective bargaining with blind workers in the sheltered workshop. No decision could have been more definite. The three-judge panel was unanimous in directing the Cincinnati Association for the Blind to comply with the bargaining orders of the National Labor Relations Board. "Enforcement granted," the Court's decree read.

Readers of the *Monitor* will recall many of the facts which led to this landmark decision and order. It might be said that the Cincinnati case began in 1977 when some workers at the Association's sheltered workshop contacted labor union representatives to discuss the advantages of organizing a bargaining unit. But, in a very real sense, the struggle in Cincinnati had its origins in the founding of the National Federation of the Blind in Wilkes-Barre, Pennsylvania in 1940. From the outset, this movement has been based on a declared commitment to achieve "security, equality, and opportunity" for the blind, and to this date we are keeping faith with that solemn pledge. Winning the right to labor union representation for the blind in sheltered workshops has not come easily. The Cincinnati decision is not the end of the line by any means. But, it is a plateau along the way, and a crucial victory.

In reaching its decision, the Court in the Sixth Circuit had to address all of the standard arguments against labor union rights for the blind. First, there was the contention that the blind people who work in the Cincinnati shop are not employees.

In response, the Court found that the National Labor Relations Act does not attempt a precise definition of an "employee," stating broadly that the term "employee" shall include any employee unless specifically stated otherwise. Further, the Court found that the law does not state otherwise with respect to the blind people who work in the Cincinnati Association Shop. In short, the blind workers are employees.

The Court was not impressed by the counterargument that Congress intended the blind to be regarded as "clients" not employees. This point was made when the Cincinnati Association advanced the rather novel theory that three laws—the Wagner-O'Day Act, the Fair Labor Standards Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973—all express the position of Congress that workshops are established and promoted as part of a rehabilitation and therapy system for the blind and as a source of remunerative employment. The eleven-page written opinion shows that the Court gave careful consideration to this argument of "Congressional intent," but concluded in the end that "... Congress has not indicated that it shares the Association's belief in the fundamental incompatibility of collective bargaining and any form of 'therapy.' Neither has it expressed a contrary policy. We simply lack a basis on which to make an informed judgment about 'Congressional intent' in this area."

The second position asserted by the Cincinnati Association was that ordering collective bargaining in its sheltered workshop would not "effectuate the purposes" of the National Labor Relations Act. Therefore, the Board's bargaining orders should be reversed. Here, too, the Court engaged in a detailed analysis of the Association's argument that collective bargaining is an antagonistic procedure in an agency whose functions are purportedly rehabilitative

and therapeutic. While on balance this opinion is fairly restrained, (although decisive), the Court does chide the Association for making repetitious arguments, which it characterized as "variations on a single theme."

To support its second contention that collective bargaining in its sheltered workshop would "not effectuate the purposes" of the National Labor Relations Act, the Cincinnati Association cites an instance in 1977 where the National Labor Relations Board declined to order collective bargaining in a Southern California workshop operated by Goodwill Industries of America. The Association was obviously hoping that the Court would permit it to ride the coattails of this decision and claimed that the Board was treating similar entities in a different manner by ordering collective bargaining for blind workers in Cincinnati while excusing Goodwill Industries in Southern California. But the Court would have none of it. "The result in this case," the Court states, "was based on a finding of fact that economic motives prevail at the Cincinnati Workshop despite the Association's professed 'therapeutic' orientation." This conclusion then led to the inevitable declaration that "we therefore reject the Association's contention that the Board's action constituted an abuse of discretion." So said the Court.

These arguments—that blind workers are not employees and that requiring collective bargaining in sheltered workshops will not effectuate the purposes of the National Labor Relations Act—are nothing more than the old standards. But in this case, the Cincinnati Association also included a little variety, just to spice things up a bit. This came in the form of a third contention that the National Labor Relations Board erred by certifying a bargaining unit which contained both blind and sighted workers.

To support this charge, the Association noted certain differences in the treatment of blind and sighted workers. For example, there is a separate set of disciplinary procedures for the blind as opposed to the sighted. Also, different pay scales apply, under which the blind work on a piece-rate basis, while the sighted are paid by the hour, at no less than the minimum wage. Finally, sighted workers participate fully in the Association's pension plan, but the blind are excluded from this program. The Association argued that these differences in its treatment of the two classes of workers meant that a single bargaining unit covering both would be improper. The Court was not convinced and upheld the Board's finding that a single bargaining unit, including the blind along with the sighted, would be appropriate. Although the Court did not engage in a discussion about this, its decision to uphold a single bargaining unit is likely based on the feeling that including the blind and the sighted together might lead to more equitable treatment for the blind. Thus, the Association's own arguments as to the virtues of how its blind and sighted workers are treated differently may have been the evidence which the Court ultimately used as the basis for its order that blind and sighted workers alike should be regarded as members of the same class.

By any standard imaginable, this decision is a straight-from-the-shoulder, forthright, and unwaivering pronouncement by the Federal courts that blind people who work in a typical sheltered workshop have the right to organize and bargain with management concerning such matters as wages, fringe benefits, and conditions of employment. This has been the right of other workers for decades, and now there is every reason to believe that it will one day soon become the undisputed right of the

blind, as well. For the time being, however, the struggle continues with a likely appeal by the Cincinnati Association and its allies (the American Foundation for the Blind, National Industries for the Blind, the Council of Workshops, and such like) to the United States Supreme Court. And, assuming that the appeal comes, the Supreme Court is almost certain to hear the case, especially in view of the conflicting Houston decision reached by the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals and reported in the *Braille Monitor* of December, 1981. With respect to that decision, however, the Court in the Fifth Circuit has been asked to reconsider its adverse ruling. If it decides to do so, the Sixth Circuit's position may carry some weight. Of course, the Fifth Circuit may choose to reaffirm its opposing view. If it does, the Supreme Court will have final say in resolving the conflict. The point is that the battle continues in the courts, where the blind are winning new rights. The resistance to this progress is well-financed, and it is aided by the most well-known of the key players in the nationwide agency establishment.

And, speaking of this establishment, wherever there is an effort to maintain the status quo and to employ custodial tactics to control the blind, there too, will be the National Accreditation Council for Agencies Serving the Blind and Visually Handicapped (NAC) and the American Council of the Blind. NAC's role in the Cincinnati case was described in the *Braille Monitor* of July-August, 1980. In that article, it was pointed out that NAC, which purports to be an "objective, standard-setting, accrediting body" had adopted a position against labor organizing for the blind by filing a brief before the Court in support of the Cincinnati Association. Try as one might, it is impossible to square this act with NAC's avowed commitment to "consumer-

ism," or with most of NAC's other declarations.

Consider the fact that, at the Cincinnati Association for the Blind, the consumers (blind workers in the sheltered workshop) voted by a wide margin to name a labor union and to establish a collective bargaining unit. This was a vote of the blind. It was not something merely done by the leadership of the National Federation of the Blind, which NAC has vowed to oppose, no matter what. This was a vote by local blind sheltered shop employees. Yet, in response, NAC went to court to fight the blind.

There is also the matter of NAC's own standards. On issues related to labor relations and rates of pay, the NAC standards say that a sheltered workshop must comply with the law. Apart from being more than a little pretentious and pompous, this standard is completely irrelevant, since the law requires compliance with the law, and the courts may throw you in jail if you decide to do otherwise. All the same, there are the NAC standards which say that a workshop is supposed to obey the law when it comes to recognizing a labor union. But when the National Labor Relations Board, the authority established to enforce the National Labor Relations Act, determined that the Cincinnati Association for the Blind was not in compliance with the law, NAC chose to help the Association fight the Board, rather than joining the Board in attempting to get the Association to obey the law. In other words, the NAC standards mean nothing if NAC will, as it has done in this case, invest thousands of dollars to aid an agency which willfully breaks a federal law and fights its blind

consumers in the process.

So it goes with NAC—still stubborn and still standard. The blind, on the other hand, are making progress despite NAC and in spite of resistance from the entire combine of agencies who have marshalled their forces against us. Let them come to meet us in the courts. Let them come to the Supreme Court if they wish. The blind will be there if the need arises. We shall fight on, and we shall win. The future is ours. This is the inescapable truth brought home once again by the forceful decision in Cincinnati.

And what part has the National Federation of the Blind (the organized blind of the nation) played in the Cincinnati case? We encouraged the workers. We helped them make contact with the labor unions. We stood on the picket lines with them. We raised funds to help with the battle. We found lawyers to write briefs and submit argument. We assured the workers that we would not desert them and would fight to defend them against reprisals. In short, we did all of the things which the members of a minority can do to help themselves and their brothers and sisters to rise from second-class status to full citizenship in society. We intend to continue in the same manner until complete victory has been achieved in the entire sheltered workshop controversy. The blind are as entitled to equal rights and respect as human beings as any other group in society, and we intend to see that that entitlement is fully enforced and recognized. Nothing less is sought, and nothing less will be accepted.

"Enforcement granted!" the Court decreed in Cincinnati—and the blind will remember it forever.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION: A NEW TWIST, FOREIGN SERVICE STYLE

A few years ago, we carried several articles in the *Monitor* reporting the events which followed the U. S. State Department's rejection of Mary Anne Masterson to be a Foreign Service Officer. The rejection was based solely on Miss Masterson's blindness. She was the victim of a State Department policy which treated blind people as a class, declaring that none of us possessed the physical capacity to be assigned to United States embassies and other diplomatic or military posts abroad. This official attitude was not based on sound logic, but rather on misconceptions and lack of information about blindness, plus more than the average amount of prejudice thrown in for good measure.

Largely owing to our protests (although they would probably deny it), State Department officials offered Miss Masterson a job in the United States. She accepted, and the nature of the controversy changed accordingly.

Regardless of the lack of a specific candidate, the principal issue with the State Department continued to be the use of medical standards which barred blind persons as a class from Foreign Service appointments, no matter how well qualified a given applicant might be. We pointed out that this flat prohibition on employing the blind in the Foreign Service was discriminatory, as well as being a violation of federal law. The law we had in mind was Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which requires all federal agencies to have affirmative action programs to employ and advance in employment qualified handicapped individuals. Section 501 is monitored by an internal government-wide committee comprised of the heads of several federal agencies. This committee (described in the

law as an "Interagency Committee") is responsible for approving or disapproving the affirmative action programs of each federal agency. The Department of State's program was not approved.

So the pressure was on the State Department officials to change their restrictive policy, at least to the extent necessary to obtain official approval of their affirmative action program. The result was a theoretical relaxation of the absolute prohibition against blind people serving abroad in the Foreign Service. But the means used to lift this ban were of doubtful validity from the outset.

In point of fact, the discriminatory medical standards were never altered substantively, if at all. As a result, the State Department's alleged new commitment to affirmative action would inevitably stand in conflict with the Agency's more traditional and stubborn adherence to medical restrictions. The procedure fashioned to resolve this conflict includes a review of any medical rejection, if the candidate who has been rejected requests reconsideration of the decision. When a candidate makes such a request, a panel of State Department officials is convened to decide whether to waive the medical standards. In bureaucratic terms, the charge of this panel is to determine if a Foreign Service assignment would be an undue hardship to the candidate, to the candidate's family, or to the United States. The terminology alone does not suggest a positive or "affirmative action" approach. Nonetheless, the Interagency Committee established under Section 501 of the Rehabilitation Act considered this procedure to be sufficient to warrant approving the State Department's affirmative action program for the handicapped.

Now we come to the point of applying this procedure to the individual case of a live candidate for a foreign service appointment. For example, would Mary Anne Masterson have been accepted for assignment abroad under this "affirmative action policy?" Who can tell? We do know, however, that no blind person has yet been accepted, and at least one (a person well qualified for the job) has applied and been rejected. In fact, this case is now the subject of an equal employment opportunity appeal underway with help by the Federation, against the Department of State.

The case involves the rejection of Don Galloway, a blind resident of Silver Spring, Maryland. Mr. Galloway has worked in a wide variety of administrative and professional positions in this country, but even more to the point, he most recently worked for more than two years as director of Peace Corps operations for the country of Jamaica. This was a responsible assignment in a foreign land which obviously prepared him well for the competition of Foreign Service candidacy.

Yet, qualified as he is for the work of a Foreign Service officer, Mr. Galloway was rejected solely on grounds of his blindness. Also, a related consideration in rejecting Mr. Galloway was the fact that he has a daughter, Makini, who is deaf. So here we have the practical application of the State Department's so-called affirmative action policy—a policy which is certainly not affirmative and apparently based on the principle that the best action is inaction. The official notices reprinted below illustrate how the State Department is attempting to twist and distort out of all proportion the concept of affirmative action. Mr. Galloway's response offers some evidence of his background and capacity. Doubtless, no one will be fooled by the double talk of affirmative action in the context of

a policy which amounts to the most primitive form of discrimination ever practiced against the blind. Yet, there are still those blind people who wonder why we are organized. The civil rights appeal is underway, and the Federation will do whatever is required to see the matter through. Whenever there is discrimination against the blind, and regardless of what virtuous language may be used to give it respectability, we must stand forth to meet it. Here is the correspondence:

Department of State
Washington, D.C.
October 19, 1981

Dear Mr. Galloway:

We were recently informed by the Medical Division of the Department of State that they were unable to authorize you and your daughter Makini a medical clearance for worldwide availability required of Foreign Service candidates. Under the guidelines for the Department of State's Affirmative Action Program for the Handicapped, you have a right to request a review of this decision.

If you decide to request a review, your file will be referred to a specially constituted Employment Review Committee which will consider whether or not to recommend your appointment despite the medical disqualification. This Committee focuses on the medical issue and does not address suitability concerns which may be identified by the Office of Security in its investigation that may still be in progress.

If the Committee approves your case, your candidacy before the Board of Examiners (BEX) will be reactivated. This means that, based on a successful final review of your complete file, which will consist of the results of your oral assessment, background and security investiga-

tion, autobiography, submitted SF-171, etc., your name will be entered on the BEX rank-order employment register. The rank-order is determined by the strength of your file as compared with the files of all other BEX candidates. As you can see, the process remains very competitive, and it is entirely possible to be on the register at a level not sufficiently high for you to be offered an appointment. As with all candidates, you will have an eligibility period for appointment of 18 months from the date your name is placed on the register.

Should you decide not to request a review of the medical disqualification, your candidacy will be terminated.

If you do decide to request a review, you should do so by writing within one month of the date of this letter to the Office of the Registrar, Board of Examiners for the Foreign Service, Box 9317, Rosslyn Station, Arlington, Virginia 22209. Your letter must be accompanied by a signed copy of the enclosed *Authorization for Release of Medical Information*, as required by the Privacy Act.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the Board of Examiners.

Cordially,
Harry E. Young, Jr.
Registrar
Board of Examiners
for the Foreign Service

Silver Spring, Maryland
October 26, 1981

Dear Mr. Young:

This letter is written in response to your letter of October 19, 1981 concerning a lack of medical clearance for myself and

daughter. In considering some of the possible reasons for the rejection, it is felt that it should be clearly understood that both of our conditions are permanently stabilized. Neither of us will require any medical attention for our disabilities, nor will our conditions degenerate in any aspect requiring future medical treatments.

Consequently any concerns on the part of the State Department relating to lack of adequate medical facilities for us in the Third World is unfounded.

Another area of concern may be that of safety. Throughout the past fifteen years I have traveled in a variety of countries and settings. I have successfully negotiated the streets of Kingston, Jamaica where there were goat paths for sidewalks, gulleys, pot-holes and open manholes.

In addition to my use of a cane or a guide dog I have also used a driver to accompany me into areas which would be dangerous for any American, sighted or not. I have found that the protective attitudes about blindness of most persons of the world affords me a greater measure of consideration than the average person.

Another point I wish to make is that all of my years of education, employment, travels and recreational activities have occurred after the loss of my sight.

Consequently, I feel that I am certainly qualified to become a Foreign Service Officer with worldwide availability with the Department of State. At this point I am officially requesting a review of the decision which was made.

Your consideration would be appreciated.

Sincerely,
Don Galloway

United States Department of State
Washington, D.C.
February 23, 1982

Dear Mr. Galloway:

I refer to Mr. Harry Young's letter of October 19 informing you that your medical disqualification and that of your daughter prevented us from continuing to process your candidacy for employment in the Foreign Service. You were also advised that the Employment Review Committee, under the auspices of the Department of State Affirmative Action Program for the Handicapped, would review your candidacy to determine whether an exception to the medical disqualification could be granted. The Committee considers whether an undue hardship would exist for

the candidate, his or her family and the Foreign Service if an appointment is made.

Unfortunately, the Committee decided it could not approve an exception. Consequently, we will have to terminate your candidacy for employment in the Foreign Service.

Your interest in seeking employment with us and your cooperation in complying with the preliminary requirements are appreciated. I am sorry that the outcome was not more favorable.

Sincerely yours,
Robert W. Drexler, Director
Office of Recruitment
Examination and
Employment

BLIND ON THE MOVE IN TRAVERSE CITY, MICHIGAN

by Kenneth Jernigan

Many people seem to feel that this is a decade of total gloom and lack of opportunity, but we of the National Federation of the Blind feel otherwise. It is a time of change and fluidity. It is a time which (if we do not take bold, intelligent, and assertive action) can lead to ruin for us. But it is also a time which (precisely because there is fluidity and change) can lead to better opportunities and more advancement than we have ever known. It all depends upon what we do and how we behave—how much faith we have in ourselves, how much determination we show as a movement, and how much unity and strength we can develop.

All over the country we are learning how to work closely together, not just at the

national level but as state affiliates and local chapters. There is a great upsurge of momentum and activity in every part of the nation. There is what can only be termed a sense of joy and pride in what we are doing as a Federation—and not just in major national issues but in the local problems of everyday living. The strength of the National Federation of the Blind has always been in the commitment of its local members, in the sense of identity which the individual has had with the movement as a whole, and in the ability to translate commitment into tangible action. That strength is greater now than it has ever been, and every day we see more of it.

Recently I received a letter from Mary Wurtzel of Traverse City, Michigan. Mary

and her husband Fred are part of the leadership of our Michigan affiliate, and they exemplify the kind of concerted action which Federationists are taking. Mary's letter says in part:

"I am enclosing some letters and articles which tell what our new local chapter here has been doing. We don't even have a charter yet, and we aren't very large; but it doesn't take numbers, just commitment. I am sure that people know we are here."

The action which Mary is talking about is described in an article which appeared February 27, 1982, in the *Traverse City Record-Eagle*:

Protest by Blind Ties Up Traffic

Traverse City—Horns honked and tempers flared Friday noon as nine blind people blocked traffic during a protest demonstration.

The protesters, organized by the local chapter of the National Federation of the Blind, were demonstrating the city's failure to put a special type of pedestrian crossing signal at the corner of Garfield and Carver streets.

To express their displeasure, the protesters repeatedly crossed and re-crossed busy Garfield Street. Although they went with the green lights, their slow progress across the street caused a four-block traffic jam.

"There is an ongoing tendency of the city to ignore the needs of the handicapped," protest organizer Fred Wurtzel said. "We wanted to bring this to the public's attention."

City manager Robert Anderson said the city hasn't been inattentive. As a result of a single request for a crossing device there, he said, officials have begun a city-wide

study of how blind people's traffic problems could be alleviated.

The request came from Marshal Houchin, a Carver Street resident who late last year wrote to city engineer Durane Brege, saying he had trouble crossing Garfield Street.

Brege took the matter to the seven city officials who make up Traverse City's traffic committee. They decided December 17 that Garfield and Carver wasn't a good site for the city's first audible pedestrian signal.

Anderson said the city didn't want to try an experimental device at an intersection where there hasn't traditionally been a pedestrian crossing.

Brege wrote Houchin December 23 to say the city wouldn't change his neighborhood intersection, but inviting him and other blind people to meet with city officials to discuss other intersections where the signals could be tried.

Since then, Anderson said, the city has done considerable research on signals for the blind.

"If we were guilty of anything," Anderson said, "it was that we elevated this from an individual problem to a community-wide problem of blind access."

He thinks the protest was unfair because the blind community didn't follow up on the invitation to meet with city officials. "We encouraged Houchin to be part of the 'we' to help implement a plan for the whole city."

Wurtzel, who plans to take his complaint to the city commission Monday night, said the invitation to Houchin came too late. He said Brege had earlier discouraged Houchin from attending two city meetings.

Wurtzel said city officials traditionally try to solve the problems of the handicapped without talking with their local handicapped population.

by Kathy Hall
Record-Eagle Staff Writer

In an article which appeared in the *Record-Eagle* March 13, 1982, it is clear that the action by the Federationists has brought results:

TC Plans to Improve Crossing for Blind

Traverse City—Traverse City officials have agreed to improve the pedestrian crossing at Garfield and Carver streets, as a result of a request from blind residents.

Four improvements will be made in the intersection as soon as weather permits, city public services director Dale Majerczyk said.

The changes will be a lengthening of the green cycle on Carver to give pedestrians more time to cross four-lane Garfield; painting stop bars and signs showing cars where to stop; advancing pedestrian warning signs on Garfield; and painting pedestrian crosswalks several feet behind the stop bars, he said.

He made the proposals Wednesday to representatives from the National Federation of the Blind and Thursday to the city traffic committee, which concurred.

Federation spokesman, Fred Wurtzel said he was pleased with the city's action.

The traffic committee had responded to the original request for improvements at that intersection by researching audible pedestrian signals used in other parts of the country.

Wurtzel said the Federation of the Blind is "neutral" about having an audible signal at that corner. "If everything else is done

OK, we probably don't need it."

Local Federation members are researching such signals and will discuss them further with city officials, Majerczyk said.

He has agreed to meet once a month with representatives of the Federation and the Advisory Committee for a Barrier Free Environment to discuss various projects around the city, he said.

by Kathy Hall

Record-Eagle Staff Writer

These two newspaper articles tell the story; and, of course, the story is not merely (or even primarily) the story of street-crossings and traffic patterns. It is the story of blind people joining together to take concerted action. It is the story of local leaders showing sensitivity to local problems but doing it in the context of a total national movement. It is the story of growing awareness, increasing commitment, and expanding knowhow. In other words it is the story of the National Federation of the Blind.

Unlike many groups, we are not afraid of the 1980's or the years beyond. We feel that our future is bright with promise—because we intend to make it that way. The blind have come of age, and we intend to have a say in determining our own destiny. This is why the confidence. This is why the enthusiasm for the future. This is why the National Federation of the Blind.

IDAHO'S BLIND RECOGNIZED IN CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

In the June, 1982, issue of the *Monitor* we reported that the Governor of Idaho had proclaimed January of this year as

National Federation of the Blind Month in the state. On March 2, 1982, Idaho's Senator McClure gave public recognition to

both the Idaho Commission for the Blind and the National Federation of the Blind. The *Congressional Record* for that date reports as follows:

THE IDAHO COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND

Mr. McClure. Mr. President, I would like to take a few minutes today to acknowledge the many accomplishments of an outstanding organization in my State—the Idaho Commission for the Blind. The Governor of Idaho recently proclaimed January as National Federation of the Blind Month in Idaho, and the Idaho commission has been cited as a model for other State organizations.

The National Federation of the Blind, during their national convention in 1980, recognized the Idaho Commission for the Blind as one of the best in the Nation. NFB president, Kenneth Jernigan, when asked which rehabilitation agency he would recommend to a blind friend or relative, named the Idaho agency for several reasons.

They are responsive to the needs of the blind and work closely with the blind in helping them achieve goals of employment and independence. There is a close working relationship between the agency and the National Federation of the Blind of Idaho which is the largest organization of blind in Idaho, numbering between 250 and 300 active members. Additionally, the three-member commission board has two blind members, and all work diligently to achieve policies benefiting all blind Idahoans.

The philosophy of the Idaho commission centers around the belief that the blind should be provided the opportunity to perform responsibly in their own communities. Skills and guidance are offered to

achieve adjustment to blindness and training is provided to increase blind person's ability to gain employment and independence. Individuals are expected to get a job in the competitive labor market, participate in the community and lead independent, self-supporting lives. The blind receiving rehabilitation services in Idaho are not placed in sheltered employment or shelter homes as is the general rule with many agencies that serve the blind. Instead, blind Idahoans are accepted as equal citizens and are expected to fulfill their responsibilities as such. In a day and age when the Government offers many programs that, in my opinion, simply foster dependence and do nothing to encourage employment, the Idaho commission stands as a shining example of an agency that does exactly the opposite.

The commission has one of the most active consumer-involvement systems in the Nation. Staff members are invited and expected to attend organized blind functions. Communication is encouraged between blind members and the staff about program concerns, direction and suggested solutions. Staff contacts the blind clients on a regular basis. Through this continual contact, problems are resolved and both the individual and the agency are committed to a mutually arrived at plan outlining the blind individual's steps to rehabilitation.

The Idaho Commission for the Blind is not an agency where a blind person has to work through a complicated process to communicate with staff members, either at a direct service or administrative level. It is the general rule, not the exception, for the blind person to visit with the Administrator, Mr. Howard Barton. This is an agency where everyone knows the blind people come first, and nobody gets the runaround.

Last year, Mr. President, the Idaho commission, working with a staff of 28, 8 of

whom are blind themselves, provided rehabilitation services to 335 blind individuals. Forty-four were closed as rehabilitated. Nineteen of these were homemakers. The 25 employed were earning between \$600 to \$2,000 a month and their jobs included store clerk, electrician, college professor, dairy farmer, and accountant.

Mr. President, I am very proud of the Idaho Commission for the Blind and I am

proud that last month was set aside in Idaho to honor the National Federation of the Blind. I would encourage my colleagues and their own State agencies to take a close look at how the Idaho commission works. The commission provides help with adjustment to blindness, job training and job acquisition, and the leading of independent lives. In short—simple human dignity.

THE EVENT THAT NEVER SHOULD HAVE HAPPENED

by Gary Doty

(Note: Gary Doty is one of the leaders of the NFB of Nebraska. He is Second Vice President of the state affiliate and President of the Lincoln Chapter. As this article demonstrates, he is also a knowledgeable and committed Federationist.)

On the evening of January 18, 1980, Jane and I were trying to decide what we were going to do for the evening. We talked about a few different things, and then we decided to go roller skating. When we arrived at the roller rink, we stood in line and purchased our tickets and proceeded to go inside. The young man at the door taking the tickets told us that we would not be allowed to go onto the floor with our canes.

With that I asked why. He told us that there is a rule that forbids the use of the cane on the floor and insisted that it would be a dangerous projectile and that we would not be allowed to use our canes under any circumstances. He said that if I would hit someone with it, I would hurt them. I responded with this: "Would you rather get hit with a six ounce cane or a one hundred seventy pound man?" He more or less stuttered and got angrier about the situation. To make a long story short, the conversation went from bad to worse

and both sides grew more tense.

After this had gone on for about twenty minutes or so, I decided that there was no more to discuss and told him that since I wasn't breaking any laws, I was there to skate and that was what I was going to do. He told me that if I went out onto the floor with the cane, he would have to call the police, and with that I told him fine, go ahead.

So I put on my skates and went roller skating. In the forty-five minutes to an hour that I was on the floor, there were no incidents and nothing happened that would be cause for injury. Nobody fell down and nobody tripped, nothing happened. The manager did, however, come onto the floor and tell me that the police were there. I just replied, "Send them out."

As Jane was standing on the sidelines the manager had tried to get her to talk to me and convince me to leave the floor. She told them that nothing she could do or say would change my mind and that even if it

would, she wasn't going to ask me to leave anyway. They also told her that they did not allow anything on the floor—combs and hats or anything else—that may fall or fly off. Guess what she saw? A cowboy hat.

The police did arrive, and they, too, tried to talk me into leaving the floor. I pointed out to them that there was a law that says blind people have the same rights as sighted persons. They did agree with me but said that the manager just wanted us out and they had to go along with the manager's wishes. We finally left after a few parting words.

After that happened, I went over to the Legal Services of Southeast Nebraska and looked into the possibility of filing a discrimination charge against the roller rink, and they told me to go to the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights and that they would do something there. So I did. As the Commission on Human Rights did its investigation, they found there was probable cause and ruled as such in early 1981. Going by procedure there would be a conciliation meeting at which I would be present, along with the owner and manager of the roller rink and the Commission members. The conciliation was a total failure. So we went to a hearing in October of 1981, and the case was finally decided in early 1982. The Commission on Human Rights again found cause and its part was now over.

The manager was a very bitter man and appealed to the Lancaster District County Court. The attitude of the roller rink was bad, to say the least. There was a lot more said in this case than I have mentioned. The bottom line is that they feel that the

blind cannot be independent and that we need help in everything that we do. This underlines the fact that there is discrimination and the blind need to keep fighting it. It will not just go away.

The one unfortunate thing that came out of the ruling is that it states that I, Gary Doty, can roller skate and there are no other people included in this ruling. The hearing examiner's ruling was that ALL blind persons be permitted to skate with their canes.

The National Federation of the Blind was a principal factor in winning this case. Peggy Pinder, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Iowa, was my attorney; and there were also other Federationists there, too. Of course, the entire membership of the national body of the Federation was standing behind us—with all which that implies in the way of resources, knowhow, and moral support. The Human Rights Commission did exactly what we would have hoped. When they had questions about blindness, they consulted with those of us who are blind. They kept in touch with our National Headquarters in Baltimore, and they demonstrated both sensitivity and responsiveness. Not only does this case demonstrate the determination and resourcefulness of the Federation, but it also shows how much impact we have already made in shifting public attitudes. A few years ago the favorable decision of the Human Rights Commission would not have been possible. The climate of public opinion would not have permitted it; the law would not have sustained it; and probably I myself would not have had the confidence and experience to begin it and see it through.

LETTER FROM OKLAHOMA

Earlier this year Ethel Susong, who was at that time President of our Oklahoma affiliate, asked the National Office of the Federation to send a team to the state to help build membership and strengthen the organization. The National Office responded to the call, and the organizing team did very productive work. Because of the repressive nature of the Oklahoma state agency and of the Oklahoma League for the Blind (a sheltered shop which leaves a great deal to be desired) blind people in the state have been heavily custodialized and put down. However, freedom is a hard thing to extinguish, and our efforts in Oklahoma through the years are gradually beginning to bear fruit. No matter how repressive the agency in a state may be and no matter how closely it may join hands with the American Council of the Blind or sheltered shops, the blind will ultimately settle for nothing less than first-class citizenship.

Our new President in Oklahoma is Michael Floyd. He and his wife Fatosh are ruggedly independent, not the type to be intimidated or browbeaten. Before the organizing effort this year, the Floyds were members of the American Council of the Blind, but they were never comfortable with the ACB—never felt that it was doing anything or going anywhere. Now, they have found the NFB, and they have a new perspective and have spoken out. Here is a letter from Michael Floyd to the Oklahoma President of the American Council of the Blind which seems to sum the whole matter up:

Tulsa, Oklahoma

March 12, 1982

Mr. Joseph Fallin
Oklahoma City, Oklahoma

Dear Mr. Fallin:

This letter is to notify you that my wife and I wish to resign our membership in the Oklahoma Council of the Blind (OCB) effective immediately. We would like to share with you our reasons for doing so.

We joined the OCB because we wanted to be a part of an organization that would improve opportunities for blind people. We found little activity in the Tulsa chapter. For instance, what is being done to pass legislation both at the state and federal levels to benefit us? How are we helping blind people obtain jobs? What are we doing to increase the public's awareness of what blind people can do?

I spoke with you about the inactivity of this chapter and your solution was to start another chapter in the same city. The problem is, however, not just with this chapter. There seems to be no support coming from the state organization or from the American Council of the Blind (ACB). They are like a whole different organization of which I never felt a part. You even told me that if you lived in another state you would have probably joined the National Federation of the Blind (NFB).

Recently, we were contacted by members of the NFB and asked if we would like to know more about them and, if we agreed with their philosophy, we were

urged to join the organization. We decided to listen to what they had to say. They not only answered our questions in detail, but they provided us with literature which would help us learn more about the beliefs of the members in the Federation. They talked openly and honestly about the differences between the ACB and the NFB. What impressed us the most was the fact that the NFB is all one organization. It is not one organization made up of a bunch of little outfits. They left us with the feeling that we would have support from friends all over the country; and that we, in

turn, could help others in the same way.

This is why we have elected to drop our membership in the OCB and become actively involved in the NFB. I am proud to say that on February 27, 1982, I was elected to the presidency of the NFB of Oklahoma. I look forward to working hard in the organized blind movement and I hope that other blind Oklahomans will join me.

If you have any reason to telephone me my number is (918) 587-5954.

Sincerely,
Michael Floyd

COMMENTS FROM NEW ENGLAND

by *Kenneth Jernigan*

Recently I received a letter from Gerald Paice of Massachusetts. Among other things, he said:

"Let me congratulate you and your associates on a superb April *Monitor*. It had all the ingredients of a first-rate publication. Those are my views, and they are the views of several *Monitor* readers with whom I have talked recently.

"One of the features that gave the *Monitor* flavor was the letter to *Guideposts* objecting to their mode of advertising and money raising. It was well done and to the point, and it expressed the views of many of us. This type of tear jerking has to stop. It demonstrates poor taste and it is damaging. These people pretend to be our benefactors and friends, when in reality they are our enemies and destroyers.

"The April *Monitor* also was instructive. Let me show you how. I, too, heard that objectionable advertisement by United Airlines depicting the stupid blind man who kept removing his glasses, and I was

furiously. Did I do anything about it? No. I left it to Sharon Gold. She sat down at her typewriter and protested, and the advertisement immediately disappeared all over the country. In the meantime, I kept right on fuming and sputtering. Sharon taught me a lesson I will never forget. She must be quite a trooper. The sad part of it is that none of us give people like Sharon their proper recognition. We expect them to carry the ball and they do it, saving us the trouble. I guess that's life, but it needn't be that way. I know one thing: I'll never be caught like that again. I think that this thing deserves a long, hard look. Alone, Sharon was able to influence United to the extent that they withdrew that ad from all outlets throughout the country. Think what we could accomplish if we all acted in concert. What would happen, for instance, if twenty or thirty of us zeroed in on *Guideposts*. I have the feeling that we would have no further problem with them—but it won't happen. You know that better than

I do."

Gerald Paice said a great many other things about the April *Monitor* and about blindness in general and the Federation in particular. He also sent me a copy of a letter which he wrote under date of April 5, 1982, to the Editor of the *Boston Daily Globe*. It demonstrates once again how blind people throughout the country are taking a hand in their own affairs. Here is the letter:

Arlington, Massachusetts
April 5, 1982

Dear Editor:

According to a recent announcement on several Boston radio stations, a well known athlete participating in this year's BAA Marathon will represent an agency for the blind in this area. This is a money-raising gimmick, and the objective of the athlete will not be to win, but to be conspicuous. Since he has normal vision, he will be provided with blinders and a guide and he will portray the image of a blind athlete attempting to compete with his sighted peers.

I am a blind person. I do not view myself as an object of pity and shame, and neither do I feel that I am a total disaster. By the same token, I do not regard myself as a genius with compensating faculties which transform me into a freak. I trust that I am a normal person with normal hopes and ambitions and perhaps a better than average determination to succeed.

The purpose of the marathon caper is to stimulate the emotions of the onlookers and to arouse their sympathies to the ex-

tent that they will contribute to the organization in question. The financial success of such a calculated appeal is practically guaranteed. The harm it will do to the ambitious blind individual, however, is irreparable. Obviously, the benefitting organization for the blind feels that this is not their concern.

As blind individuals, we are keenly aware of our problems, and we are constantly striving to minimize them. We are equally aware of our intelligence, our capabilities and our potential as contributors to the national effort. Such confidence is not based upon emotion. Our objective is to prepare ourselves to compete on an equal basis. All we ask is the opportunity to demonstrate our skills. This is a far cry from this inhuman and irresponsible public demonstration of inadequacy and dependence. Our prime need is not pity and alms, but respect and acceptance.

Most of the various organizations for the blind throughout the nation do a very commendable job, and they are worthy of public support. The fact is, however, that not all blind people are institutionalized. Many of us are making it on our own. We are determined to erase the false images of the past and to project new and true images based upon fact and actual performance. Comic characters and pathetic situations no longer have a place in our lives, and we long for the day when this will be a public recognition.

Thank you for the opportunity to express myself.

Sincerely,
Gerald J. Paice

LETTER TO UNITED AIRLINES

Bonnie O'Day Aune is one of the leaders of our Minnesota affiliate. She is both articulate and knowledgeable. She is also a person of sensitivity. Recently she had occasion to write to Richard Ferris, Chairman of the Board of United Airlines. Her letter is as follows:

Minneapolis, Minnesota
April 7, 1982

Dear Mr. Ferris:

I am writing to you concerning an unfortunate incident which took place on Sunday, March 21, 1982. I boarded United Airlines flight #621 traveling from Denver to Minneapolis/St. Paul. I was assigned a seat in an exit row, and boarded the plane without mishap. I was comfortably situated in my seat when a flight attendant informed me that "only able bodied persons were allowed to sit in exit rows, and I would need to change seats." I stated that I was able bodied, that I was just blind, and would be as capable as anyone else to vacate the plane, if necessary, in case of emergency. We discussed the matter for several moments, and, since my seat had already been reassigned to another passenger, I reluctantly changed seats.

The flight attendant informed me that the FAA had promulgated regulations which required that blind persons must sit in areas other than exit rows, and that United Airlines would be fined several thousand dollars for non compliance with this regulation. I question the validity of these statements. It is my opinion that the FAA has issued advisory guidance on the subject, and that each individual airline is free to develop its own policies for safe evacuation of its aircraft. If the FAA has,

in fact, promulgated binding rules which specifically stipulate that blind persons are not to be seated in exit rows, I would appreciate it very much if you would send me a copy of these rules. If United Airlines has developed such a policy itself, and I suspect that this is the case, then more discussion is definitely in order.

With proper training in the use of a white cane or guide dog, blind persons are able to travel as independently and efficiently as those with sight. If such training has been provided, our major handicap is not the lack of eyesight, but the lack of understanding and misconceptions about blind persons held by some members of the general public. My experience with United Airlines is a case in point. The flight attendant assumed that, because I was blind, I would not be able to open the exit door and leave the plane as readily as someone with perfect sight. I submit that this is not the case. I was situated directly next to the exit door. I knew how to open the door, and would have been able to vacate the plane without difficulty. In situations where my fellow passengers may have difficulty vacating the plane due to the presence of smoke or the lack of light, the assistance I could have provided may have proved invaluable.

I was informed that United Airlines policy stated that flight attendants would provide assistance to handicapped passengers after all able bodied passengers were safely evacuated, in case of emergency. I respectfully submit that I would be crazy to remain helplessly seated until a flight attendant had a spare moment to lend me a hand. I frankly don't know of any blind person who would behave in such a manner. I also would submit that this policy lends

interesting insight as to United Airlines priorities regarding the safety of handicapped passengers, in cases of emergency.

I am a member of the National Federation of the Blind, a nationwide, consumer organization of blind persons. The leadership of this organization worked with you to develop your current policies which allow blind persons to keep their long white canes with them while flying. It is to your credit that you have taken such affirmative steps to insure that blind passengers are allowed to fly comfortably and safely. However, I am deeply angered and offended by the attitudes towards blind persons reflected in your policy which refuses to allow blind persons to sit in exit rows. I have flown on other airlines, and

have been allowed to occupy a seat in an exit row without misunderstanding or mishap.

Please feel free to contact Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, President, National Federation of the Blind at the address below, if you desire assistance in correcting this policy. Your immediate attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Cordially,
Bonnie O'Day-Aune

cc: Dr. Kenneth Jernigan, President
National Federation of the Blind
1800 Johnson Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21230

LEWIS STARTS OVER AGAIN, AND SUCCEEDS

by VaLinda Henze
Courier Staff Writer

(Note: The following article appeared in the Saturday, March 20, 1982, Ottumwa Courier, which is a South Iowa newspaper. Carol Lewis is a staunch Federationist. Her counselor, Richard Davis, is also a Federationist. She enrolled at the Iowa Commission for the Blind in 1978—before the deterioration of the Commission programs. Carol Lewis is a living embodiment of the soundness of the philosophy of the NFB and of its practical value as a way of life. Incidentally, Carol's fiance, Mickey Smith, is also a dedicated member of the Federation, as well as a long-time employee in the library at the Iowa Commission for the Blind.)

Carol Lewis' life couldn't be much happier. She recently received an associate degree, passed her nursing home administrator's certification tests with flying colors and is getting married in June.

But things weren't always so for the outgoing 40-year-old.

Lewis grew up on an Ottumwa farm with parents Warren and Ferné Lewis and four other brothers and sisters. She graduated from Cardinal High School in 1960, fourth

in her class in scholastic rankings.

She attended St. Joseph School of Nursing at Ottumwa Heights College and became a licensed practical nurse in 1962. She was the director of nursing at the former Resthaven Nursing Home in Ottumwa for slightly more than seven years.

In 1975 at the age of 34 her eyesight failed "almost overnight."

"I'd pick up the (news) paper and it was like a million little dots.

"If I looked outdoors it would be all green. The sky was all blue. Indoors, it was all one color—I couldn't distinguish what was there," she relates.

Lewis consulted local doctors who sent her to Iowa City. There, the diagnosis was retinitis pigmentosis—a disease in which layers of retina reproduce like scar tissue. Cause of the disease is not known and there is no cure.

One assisting doctor there told her she "would be better off dead."

In about a year her vision deteriorated to the point where she was legally classified as blind but had slight seeing ability in darkness. Her vision is stabilized at that level today.

Career gone with her sight

What bothered Lewis most was not the loss of eyesight but the loss of her much-loved career.

"Nursing was my whole life. I wasn't in nursing for the money but for the love of people.

"Overnight I was thrust in a different world," says Lewis. "I knew there was an opportunity to come that God would give me. I had the support of my family."

It was the beginning of a troubled time; her father had died shortly before, she was without a job or transportation, her sister and family needed care at the farm and her electrolyte system was "out of kilter."

She used the terms "handicapped," "inability to see" or some other word to avoid saying "blind."

Lewis says there are stages every blind person goes through. These include mourning, letting everyone wait on you, "limbo" (when you float from day to day), experimentation, rebellion (when you refuse all help) and acceptance.

Lewis had applied for Social Security benefits and the staff referred her name to the Iowa Commission for the Blind in Des Moines. They contacted her for rehabilitation efforts but she resisted.

The commission counselor, Richard Davis, urged Lewis to learn Braille and use a cane.

"I didn't want anything to do with a cane; it meant I was blind and I didn't want to admit that," she says.

Instead, she agreed to learn Braille. She did it in only three weeks—an extremely short time.

In 1978 she agreed to go to the commission to live and learn blind skills. Lewis was scheduled to leave the commission's training and enter college a year later. But another stumbling block entered her life.

While in Des Moines, Lewis was struck by a car and as a result, spent much time in surgery, a body cast and crutches. She got off the crutches two years later and began classes at the Des Moines Area Community College the next day.

Course work was completed with the help of readers, tapes and Braille materials funded partially by the commission.

She graduated last year from the college with a degree in long-term health care administration. Her lowest college grade was a "B."

Lewis first in the state

But perhaps Lewis' most notable achievement was her latest, that of passing the state and national Nursing Home Administrator certification tests to receive her license. Lewis had no trouble making the grade and became Iowa's first totally blind nursing home administrator in doing so.

She was awarded a \$2,500 scholarship given to only one recipient in the nation

each year, from the National Federation of the Blind.

Lewis is looking for an administrative position in the Des Moines area so her fiancé, Mickey Smith, can stay in his job as library associate for the Iowa Commission for the Blind after the couple is married.

She met Smith while attending the commission. He is sighted.

Lewis has come full-term in her acceptance of blindness. She now refers to it as a "nuisance."

"I don't think about it because I know I can function as a blind person. I can handle whatever comes," she says.

Lewis speaks about blindness at rallies, club meetings, schools and wherever she has the opportunity. Her aims, as a member of the National Federation of the Blind, include dispelling misconceptions about the condition.

"They kill us with kindness," she says of society's actions toward blind persons. "You're the same person with the same capabilities—you just have to do things a little differently."

Lewis' mother, Ferne, replies: "She's always been the same Carol to me—someone we've been very proud of."

THE BLIND IN MEDICAL PROFESSIONS

by *Ramona Walhof*

Assistant Director

Job Opportunities for the Blind
National Federation of the Blind

I recently attended the convention of the National Federation of the Blind of Delaware, and a discussion occurred that brought home to me a sharp realization that the Job Opportunities for the Blind program is accomplishing things that no other organization or service can do. The speaker was relating some of the experiences of a blind person who is now the head of the Department of Anesthesiology at New York University. This man became blind while teaching Anesthesiology at the University of Kentucky. He continued to do his work admirably for some time and was offered the position at NYU, which he accepted, and he has worked in his current position for several years. The speaker who related this man's experience said (as an aside to the audience) that: Of course, it isn't reasonable to expect that blind people

can be successful physicians. Nobody would want to go to them for treatment. This man is in a very exceptional situation.

Federationists will not be surprised to know that there were individuals present in the audience who took the speaker to task for this statement. They said: What about David Hartman? A lot of people thought he couldn't and shouldn't be permitted to go to medical school and practice medicine. But he did, and he is.

There ensued some discussion. Is it reasonable for a blind person to practice medicine? Are there essential duties a blind person cannot perform? Is it reasonable for him or her to depend on an assistant for some things? Will patients have confidence in a blind physician? What about surgery? What about nursing? Who should make the decisions about what is

reasonable for a blind person to do in medicine and what isn't?

I realized that Job Opportunities for the Blind has been accumulating data in this area for at least two years and that we have access to and input from blind persons throughout the country. This means that what happens in Kentucky, New York, and Louisiana is likely to benefit those in similar situations in California, South Carolina, and Michigan. JOB serves as a national melting pot for collecting and disbursing data about the experiences of blind persons in employment and in preparation for employment throughout the country. It is not the only national service or organization attempting to do this, but its record is more impressive than any other, and its approach is more optimistic and, therefore, it is moving rapidly into new spheres for the blind.

David Hartman, whose story has been publicized nationally, is the blind man who fought to gain admission to Temple Medical School and won. He completed his medical training, specialized in psychiatry, and is now practicing medicine as a psychiatrist. Mark Ravin, the head of the Department of Anesthesiology at NYU, is blind also. Spencer Lewis was a Family Practitioner in Louisiana. When he became blind he believed he could continue to practice medicine. The hospital said he couldn't. His patients wanted him to. He challenged the decision of the hospital and was permitted (with some limitations) to treat patients there.

When this case was brought to my attention, I must confess that I felt some apprehension. I asked one question: How did his patients feel about it? When I was told that his patients overwhelmingly wanted Dr. Lewis, blind or sighted, to treat them, that was enough for me. I said to myself, "If my doctor were suddenly to become

blind, would that shake my confidence in him? I know the answer. My confidence is in the doctor, not in his eyesight, and it would not change. And I said to myself, "Why then, should I think that blindness might cause problems for a doctor I do not know? Why should I expect a doctor to be more competent if he can see than if he can't?" I have schooled myself to face squarely such questions, even if the path leads me where this one does. The answer has nothing to do with the doctor; it has to do with my attitudes toward blindness. Although I have confidence in qualified blind people as engineers, secretaries, teachers, machinists, administrators, and janitors—I am still subject to society's approach to blindness. Without reasoning it through, my reaction to a blind doctor was one of fear and concern for his competence. Such a reaction has grown from the standard notion that blind people are generally incompetent. I have shaken off this attitude painfully, and bit by bit, but not totally. My reaction to Dr. Spencer Lewis taught me something about myself—something which causes me to be very careful about saying to blind persons that sight is required or necessarily a controlling advantage. Certainly, it is an advantage, but we must guard against exaggerating its importance—even those of us who are leading the way to try to demonstrate the competence of the blind.

We must also guard against assuming brazenly that blindness does not prevent a person from doing anything. The time may come when technology is such that a blind person can drive a car or pilot a plane, but the time is not now or near at hand, and it would not help anyone—especially the blind—to pretend that this is not true. If a blind person cannot see to read print comfortably, no pretense or wishing can change the fact. Thus, we must constantly be care-

ful to determine whether *seeing* is essential to performing a given task, and it's not always easy to know. It is necessary to have knowledge both about blindness and the work to be done in order to have a good chance of finding a method for a blind person to use. I know something about blindness, but I do not know enough about medicine to determine whether a blind person can perform the duties of a doctor or not.

Dr. Spencer Lewis did continue to practice medicine, and his practice increased in size. How can anyone doubt his competence in the face of evidence such as this? If he continued to treat most of his former patients, and new patients came to him as well, (which is what happened)—he was certainly successful as a blind doctor.

When the hospital relented and permitted Spencer Lewis to treat patients there, they did not permit him to deliver babies. Again, he and his patients considered this unreasonable, and he did deliver babies at home and in the clinic. In fact, he delivered a baby for Federationists JoAnne and Joseph Fernandes—new patients who got to know him after he became blind.

In the spring of 1982, Dr. Lewis died, and he is missed by those he treated. The work he did lives on, for it is conclusive evidence that a blind person can practice medicine successfully and that he can gain the confidence of large numbers of patients. And the work of Dr. Spencer Lewis lives on in another way as well.

He realized that it is important for the American Medical Association to recognize that competent performance as a physician need not be impaired by blindness or other physical handicaps. Therefore, he and his wife set about contacting blind doctors and those who are losing vision throughout the country. JOB will carry on the effort to help blind doctors gain acceptance in

practice. We believe that more than twenty doctors are currently practicing medicine successfully in this country.

But there are numerous other types of work in medicine, and blind persons have been discouraged, if not barred, from entering most of them. This, in spite of the fact that there have been a few isolated successes in almost every area of employment and training. Anthony Burda is a trained pharmacist, and is blind. When he applied for a license as a pharmacist in Illinois, he was told that as a blind person he could not be licensed. With Federation assistance, Tony Burda was able to receive his license as a pharmacist, and he is now employed in the Poison Control Department of St. Lukes-Presbyterian Medical Center in Chicago.

Some states have regulations denying licenses to blind persons who are qualified to be occupational therapists and physical therapists. We know of blind people who are successfully employed by hospitals doing both types of work. The Federation has actively fought legislation and regulations which would limit job opportunities for the blind in these areas, and we will continue to do so. Job Opportunities for the Blind will continue to be in touch with blind persons who are in training and who are employed in these professions. We are in touch with blind nurses. One is now the Director of the School of Nursing at Mercy Hospital in Des Moines, Iowa. One has experience in the administration of a nursing home. We are also in touch with blind nurses who are competent, but have not yet been able to obtain employment. In addition, we know blind persons who would like to become nurses, but, thus far, have been unable to gain admission to a school of nursing. Job Opportunities for the Blind is working on this matter. It is not reasonable to deprive a blind person of an education just because there may be

some positions in the field that do require sight. There are also many which do not.

The April, 1982, edition of the *JOB Recorded Bulletin* carried two articles which are relevant to the success of the blind in medical professions. One dealt with employment opportunities in pharmaceutical sales. This is clearly an area where blindness would not be a disadvantage. A Bachelor of Science degree in nursing or a degree in Pharmacy is important to anyone entering the field. Another article from the *Job Opportunities for the Blind Recorded Bulletin* for April dealt with the expanding scope of nutrition in health care—again an area where blind people should be able to compete with no difficulty, given the opportunity.

It will take some study and experience to determine exactly which jobs in medicine can be performed competitively by the blind and which cannot. It is clear that we do not yet have all the answers. *JOB* will continue to work with blind persons, training programs, and employers to develop new opportunities and determine what is reasonable. However, it is clear from the few examples cited here, that the horizons for the blind in the medical field are more far-reaching than most people (including many competent and forward-looking blind persons) have thought. There was a time when blind persons were encouraged to enter the field of chiropractic medicine. That time is no more, even though blind chiropractors have been and are extremely successful. There are those who say that

blind people cannot now compete because the field of chiropractic medicine is being upgraded. It is depending more on X-rays and other lab work. Blind chiropractors regard this upgrading as a good thing, for them as well as for the sighted. They resent and deny the implication that the blind cannot meet the higher standards.

Blind persons are doctors, pharmacists, nurses, therapists, and chiropractors. What is true of employment for the blind in the medical professions is what we have known for many years about employment for the blind generally. The biggest problem we face is an attitudinal one. We must fight for the opportunity to compete. Once we get the opportunity, there is no doubt that we can succeed.

Job Opportunities for the Blind is actively working to develop new and better opportunities for blind persons in the medical professions and in all other kinds of work. If you know of persons who have encountered difficulties because of blindness when they wished to continue or begin employment in any of these professions, refer them to *JOB*. If you know of blind persons who have experiences that might be beneficial to others, please tell *JOB* about them. We are moving ahead in the development of more and better employment opportunities for the blind because of cooperation from thousands of persons across the country. We must keep the momentum going. We have too much at stake to stop.

OF COFFEE AND MONEY AND VENDORS

At the National Vendors Conference held in Denver on February 12, 1982, a representative of J.B.J. Enterprises, Mr.

William Sims, provided information on a new product which will enhance the revenue of vendors who use it as well as the revenues

of the National Federation of the Blind.

The new product, Coffee Treasure Enhancer, is a combination of all natural ingredients which, when mixed with pure coffee, either ground or freeze-dried, will result in a less bitter coffee producing customer satisfaction and since it requires 40% less coffee per serving, it also produces higher profits for vendors.

Additionally, Mr. Sims announced that J.B.J. will make donations to the National Federation of the Blind national treasury in direct relation to the amount of Coffee Treasure Enhancer shipped to vendors.

Orders are placed with J.B.J. Enterprises at 5920 Nall - Suite 202; Mission, Kansas 66202, and are shipped via United Parcel Service on a C.O.D. basis. Proceeds from each sale are forwarded to the NFB with final settlement to J.B.J. being handled by

the National office.

Mr. Sims announced that he is willing to send limited samples to any vendor who would like to make a market test of the product to determine the validity of the claims made for Coffee Treasure Enhancer.

At the Denver Conference, Mr. Charlie Erickson of Iowa, gave high marks to customer satisfaction and the improved profitability on coffee sales he has achieved by using Coffee Treasure Enhancer.

A packet of materials provided by Mr. Sims gives considerable testimony and technical information on the product.

To request samples, information or to place an order, contact Mr. William Sims; J.B.J. Enterprises; 5920 Nall - Suite 202; Mission, Kansas 66202 - Telephone: 913/677-2122 or 913/677-4016.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH

by Sharlene Czaja

(Note: Sharlene Czaja was formerly the President of our Chicago Chapter and JOB coordinator in the state of Illinois. She now lives in New York. In submitting this recipe she says: "When I lived in Chicago, Federationists seemed to like this recipe very much. Unfortunately, whenever anyone asked for the recipe it was usually buried somewhere. So now, while I have it handy, I wish to share it with all Federationists.")

CHEESE BALL HORS D'OEUVRE

Ingredients: 1 cup sharp shredded cheddar cheese
 ½ stick margarine
 ½ cup flour
 ¼ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon paprika
 1 jar whole mushrooms (1 use Green Giant)

Mix all ingredients except for the mushrooms. When mixed, roll around the mushrooms. Make sure that the mushrooms have previously been well drained. Bake in a 400 degree oven for ten minutes on a cookie sheet. The person from whom I obtained the recipe informs me that one can prepare these in advance and freeze them on a cookie sheet. Later one can bake them.

MONITOR MINIATURES □ □ □ □ □

□ Texas Convention—Report from Doris Henderson:

The NFB of Texas held its annual convention March 12 - 14 in San Antonio. Glenn Crosby was re-elected President. Jeff Percy was elected First Vice President; Roy Miller, Second Vice President; Doris Henderson, Secretary; Manuel Gonzalez, Treasurer; and Bernice Ruffin and Albert Wilson, Board Members. PAC pledges were increased by a sizable amount. Diane McGeorge represented the National Office, and she and Pony (her guide dog, in case anyone does not know) were made honorary Texans by unanimous voice vote of the convention. Two \$500 scholarships and a \$2,900 contribution to the Bowie Taylor Endowment Fund were made. The contribution was made by Gladys Taylor Tenpenny.

□ The Baby Boom:

Eric Shawn Mackenstadt made his appearance in the world at 5:17 Thursday afternoon, April 1, 1982. He weighed eight pounds, fourteen ounces, and was twenty and one-half inches long. His father, Gary Mackenstadt, and his mother, Denise Mackenstadt, are both doing well. The NFB of Washington has one more staunch adherent, and the decade of the baby goes forward.

□ From JOB:

From February 1 to March 31, 1982, thirty-two blind persons found employment in full or in part as a result of assistance from the Job Opportunities for the Blind program. This means that (in a little more than two years) 191 blind persons

have been helped by JOB and have found competitive employment. This is a record of which we can all be proud, especially in this time of high unemployment rates for everyone nationwide. Since its beginning in December of 1980, JOB has been gaining momentum and increasing in effectiveness. When a job applicant finds employment, it means that person is working competitively—not as a sheltered shop employee, not an unpaid family worker, and not a home-maker. It means that the person is not working in subsidized employment. JOB has helped (and continues to help) people get jobs in sheltered or subsidized employment but these are not counted in the totals listed here. Probably no rehabilitation agency in the country has ever had such a record. Certainly no agency with only three full-time staff members has ever accomplished anything like it. But of course, the JOB program is much more than the three staff members. It depends on a hundred volunteers for systematic work and thousands of Federationists in addition. JOB is Federationism at its best. Its impact on employment opportunities for blind persons is being felt, and we are only at the threshold.

□ Request from Oregon:

Mike Bullis from the NFB of Oregon wishes to correspond with blind people who have had experience in farming and home building. He is interested in every aspect of farming, from sowing to reaping, and in every aspect of home building, from turning the first piece of ground to putting on the final coat of paint. If you have developed alternative techniques which might be helpful in these areas, please write Mike at 725 S. E. 28, Portland, Oregon 97214.

□ From Dorothy Grubb, President, Lansing, Michigan Chapter:

Marilyn Pretzer, who was a member of the Lansing, Michigan Chapter, of the National Federation of the Blind for several years, passed away at 1:45 a.m., on March 30, 1982. She lost her sight as a result of diabetes, and then it was discovered that she also had cancer.

But in spite of all these obstacles, Marilyn remained a very loyal and dedicated member of NFB. When she was able, she served on many committees and participated in all the activities of the Federation. Even after her physical condition became such that she could no longer attend our monthly meetings, she continued to support us with her endurance, strength and cheerful spirit.

Marilyn never gave up fighting, and all those who knew her were touched and strengthened by her courage. The courageous spirit, endurance and strength which she had should serve as a challenge to all Federationists; for if we possess these qualities, we can accomplish anything we want in our daily lives.

We will miss Marilyn in Michigan and her memory will always remain with us.

□ Still More on the Decade of the Baby:

Anna Katherine Cheadle arrived on this planet at 3:06 on the morning of April 6, 1982. She weighed six pounds, nine and one-half ounces, and was twenty-one and one-half inches long. John and Barbara Cheadle, who are the proud parents and who are now living in Jefferson City, Missouri, are doing well. Says father John: "At first I thought I would enter her in a beauty contest, but then it occurred to me that since no one else would have a chance, it wouldn't be fair."

□ Chess:

The printed edition of *Chess Life*, a monthly chess publication, is now available on cassette. On a loan/fee basis the cost is \$15.00 per annual subscription (12 issues per annum). *Castle*, a quarterly chess publication, is available on cassette. The cost is \$6.00 per annum. If interested, contact Gintautas Burba, 30 Snell Street, Brockton, Massachusetts 02401.

□ From South Bend, Indiana:

We recently received word of the death of Ellis Updike who, at the time of his death, was President of our South Bend Chapter, National Federation of the Blind of Indiana. Mr. Updike was a long-time member of the Federation. His successor as President of the South Bend Chapter is Karen Swift.

□ Correction:

In the February, 1982, edition of the *Monitor* we reported on the Ohio convention. We said: "After Senator Metzenbaum's address, a panel discussed the future of rehabilitation in Ohio; panel members were: James Gashel, Doris Barcomb (Director of Bureau of Services for the Visually Impaired), James Maury (Attorney for the Vendors Chapter of NFBO), and Paul Dressell (Consumer member of the Advisory Board to BSVI.)" One of the panel members pointed out that we were mistaken in the spelling of his name. The attorney is Mr. James S. Mowery, Jr. He asked that we run the correction. Therefore, here it is.

□ From Jimmy Little, President, Ft. Smith, Arkansas:

The 1982 officers for our Ft. Smith, Arkansas Chapter are: President, Jimmy Little; Vice President, Ed Wagner; Secretary, Kathryn Conners; Treasurer, Ples Armstrong. Board Members: Carl Conner, Edith Spearman, and Ed Darden.

□ From Joe M. Gonzales, Santa Fe, New Mexico:

The 1982 officers of our La Luz Chapter of Santa Fe, New Mexico are: President, Joe M. Gonzales; Vice President, Carmon Trujillo; Secretary, Jennie Gonzales; and Treasurer, Roberta Oielen.

□ Bi-weekly Publication:

Business Publishers, Inc., a Silver Spring, Maryland publishing concern which specializes in executive newsletters on environment, energy, transportation, and natural and human resources, publishes a bi-weekly newsletter entitled "Handicapped Rights and Regulations." Subscription information and sample copies may be obtained by writing Business Publishers, Inc., P. O. Box 1067, Silver Spring, Maryland 20910. Telephone: 301-587-6300.

□ Pat Eschbach has surgery:

Pat Eschbach, wife of Bob Eschbach, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Ohio and National Board member, underwent surgery in mid March. She returned home from the hospital March 23. At this writing (April 1) she tells us that she is fighting a minor post-surgery infection, but she also indicates that she intends to be at full strength for National Convention. We wish her a continued speedy recovery and look forward to seeing her in Minneapolis.

□ Dotty Madsen Dies:

President of our Montana affiliate, Marlyn (Dotty) Madsen died in Great Falls March 26, 1982 of diabetic complications. Mr. Madsen has been active in the Federation since becoming blind about five years ago. He was elected President of Montana in 1981. He will be missed by Federationists who knew him. Succeeding to the Presidency is Virginia Sutich of Sand Coulee.

□ Changes in Louisiana Programs:

George Marzloff, Director of Blind Services in Louisiana, resigned suddenly in March. Acting Director is Jerry Swearrington. It is interesting to note that the Director of the Department of Health and Human Resources, George Fischer, has turned in his resignation, effective April 1. The new man in this position is Fischer's deputy, Roger Duissinger, who (presumably) is to determine the requirements for the new Director of Blind Services. It is widely believed that Jerry Swearrington expects to get the job. Federationists will doubtless have something to say about it.

□ From North Carolina:

The 1982 officers for our Queen City Chapter, which is in Charlotte, North Carolina, are Louise Hamilton, President; Ken Batchelder, Vice President; LaVerne Gallant, Secretary; Nell Speidel, Treasurer. Also, Gary Pettengill has been elected a new member of the Board of Directors of the Queen City Chapter.

□ From Karen Mayry, President of the National Federation of the Blind of South Dakota:

We have an office! On February 27, 1982, the National Federation of the Blind

of South Dakota held an open house to celebrate the opening of a state office in Rapid City, South Dakota. Many members attended as well as public visitors. The event was covered by local television and radio stations. Refreshments were served by the Rapid City Altrusa Club. We feel that we will be more visible and individuals will be more likely to contact us. We anticipate a great future.

□ From the Ohio Vendors:

In October of 1981, the Ohio Blind Vendors established a scholarship program. The committee has an annual budget of \$2,000. No applicant may receive over \$500 per year. Persons eligible are:

1. Trainee graduates from the official Ohio Rehabilitation training program, wishing to take a course of study in a business school, local or community college or something which has no funding from rehab.
2. Someone already in a vending facility wishing to take a course pertaining to food service, which would improve their ability to work in the vending facility field.
3. Vendors wishing to be trained to operate and repair vending machines.
4. Vendors being promoted from a snack-bar to a cafeteria facility could use a couple of weeks to study the operation of a cafeteria. Funds could be provided for a relief operator, so this can be done.

If you would like full details and an application form, please write to:

Mrs. Elizabeth Moore, Chairman
O.B.V. Scholarship Committee
626 Manchester Road
Mansfield, Ohio 44908

□ Fred Schroeder Appointed to Responsible Position:

Fred Schroeder is an active Federationist. He is also a Special Education Coordinator with the Albuquerque, New Mexico, Public Schools. He was recently appointed to serve on the International Professional Standards Committee of the Council for Exceptional Children.

□ Cross-Country Bike Ride:

Writing for the Hike-a-Thon/Bike-a-Thon Committee, Donna Maglin of the Capital Chapter of the National Federation of the Blind of New Hampshire says:

"We are fellow Federationists from the Capital Chapter, National Federation of the Blind of New Hampshire. On May 31, one of our members, Clyde Terry, will begin a bicycle trip from Seaside, Oregon to Ogunquet, Maine, dunking his front tire in the Atlantic Ocean on August 7, 1982. His tentative route will take him on an easterly path from Seaside, Oregon through Idaho to the Grand Tetons in Wyoming. After a side trip to Yellowstone National Park, he will continue east to the Badlands in South Dakota, and on to Minneapolis, Minnesota to attend our National Convention. From there, he will travel through Wisconsin and the upper peninsula of Michigan and into Canada, around the Great Lakes and back into New York State. The final leg will take him through Massachusetts and New Hampshire, ending in Maine. The total distance will be approximately four thousand miles.

"We are using this as a fund-raiser and felt that other states may be interested in doing the same. For further information, write to Hike-a-Thon/Bike-a-Thon Committee, Capital Chapter, National Federation of the Blind of New Hampshire, P. O. Box 1707, Concord, New Hampshire 03301."

☐ Old Timers, Oregon School for the Blind:

There's going to be an Old Timers Get-together on the campus of the Oregon School for the Blind in Salem, Oregon, on Saturday and Sunday, August 21, and 22, 1982.

All former OSB staff and students, their families and/or closest friends are warmly invited to attend.

If you are interested in attending or in receiving further notices, please send your name and current address to Mrs. Claude Garvin, 3730 SE Alder, Portland, Oregon 97214 or call (503) 232-1344. Please say whether you prefer Braille or large type notices.

☐ Congratulations:

Under date of April 6, 1982, Mr. Charles B. Beard, who is President of Colonial Life and Accident Insurance Company of Columbia, South Carolina, sent a letter of congratulations to NFB First Vice President Don Capps. The letter said in part:

"April 15 marks your 35th Anniversary with Colonial. Congratulations for an outstanding accomplishment.

"It must be exciting to know you have been part of the growth Colonial has experienced since 1947. However, it is the loyalty and hard work of dedicated employees like you who have made the Company what it is today.

"Don, I just wanted you to know how much we all appreciate the contributions you have made over the years. Thank you for a job well done!"

☐ New Mexico Convention:

The convention of the NFB of New Mexico occurred the weekend of April 16-18, 1982. Representing the National Office of the NFB was Board Member

Norman Gardner from Idaho. Diane McGeorge, NFB Board Member from Colorado, was also present. Five officers and six Board Members were elected by the convention. The officers are as follows: President, Fred Schroeder, Albuquerque; First Vice President, Joe Cordova, Albuquerque; Second Vice President, Joe Gonzales, Santa Fe; Secretary, Pauline Gomez, Santa Fe; and Treasurer, Loretta Jones, Las Cruces. The Board Members are as follows: Karen Arellano, Las Cruces; Bryan Banister, Roswell; Josie Dean, Las Vegas; Willard Houghney, Alamogordo; Larry Mayes, Albuquerque; and Linda Miller, Albuquerque.

☐ Distinguished Service Award:

Charles S. Brown, President of the National Federation of the Blind of Virginia, recently received the Distinguished Career Service Award from the U. S. Department of Labor. Mr. Brown is an attorney who is currently serving as Counsel for Special Legal Services in the Office of the Solicitor at the Labor Department in Washington, D. C. The Distinguished Career Service Award is one of the highest honors the Labor Department can bestow on an employee. The award was presented "in recognition of career service marked by sustained high quality and efficiency."

☐ Recorded Psychological Journals:

Material is available for blind psychologists. Material is read by volunteers. In most instances, subscribers pay only slightly more for the recorded journals than the print edition costs. For further information, contact: Recorded Psychological Journals, 219 North Indian Hill Boulevard, Suite 100, Claremont, California 91711; (714) 624-1725.

□ From New Hampshire:

Ed Meskys reports that President of the NFB of New Hampshire, Frank Snee, has made a rapid recovery from a serious illness and the amputation of a leg below the knee, which occurred in January, 1982. By the time of the State Board meeting in March, Frank was able to attend and preside. At the time of this writing in late

April, he plans to attend the National Convention. Ed Meskys also reports the formation of the Lakes Region Chapter of the NFB of New Hampshire in the middle part of the state. Acting President is Ed Meskys and acting secretary is Alice Savage. This is the fourth NFB chapter in New Hampshire, and it begins with a sizable membership.

THE BRAILLE MONITOR

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